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The heads of some of the mining houses have indicated in annual reports that the â\200\234reasonableâ\200\235 time period seems to have run out. The black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which was formed three-and-a-half years ago, has not been slow to gain political mileage from the issue and last year placed the matter on the agenda for its negotiations with the chamber.

Target date

These pressures, international condemnation of SA â\200\224 and frustration with the lack of progress in the talks â\200\224 undoubtedly contributed to Minister Steynâ\200\231s announcement in Parliament earlier this year that December 31 would be the target date for the chamber and the unions to conclude their negotiations.

Months have passed since then. What developments have there been? According to FM sources, most of the negotiating time has been occupied with discussions on an industrial council. Good progress has been made in drawing up a constitution, although there are still some points outstanding.

Until last week the same could not have been said for the talks on security of employment for white miners. The FM understands that the chamber made a number of proposals in conformity with the Wiehahn guidelines to the unions last March. But stonewalling by the MWU â\200\224 and a reluctance on the part of the other unions to show disunity â\200\224 ensured that nothing of greater significance occurred.

In August this year, under increasing pressure, the unions agreed to submit their proposals for adequate safeguards to the chamber by November 7. A sub-committee, convened under veteran unionist Ben Nicholson, was established to carry out this task.

RACIALISMâ\200\231'S DEATH

The â\200\231tects, the narks and the special police Are doing their best to prevent our release.

But the day is coming, take it from me,
When the workers will win and the world
will be free.

Why are we here? you ask again.
Suffering misery, enduring pain;

We have carved a new pathway, so that
when we are dead,

A world of workers can march ahead.

Although we are here in Boksburg Gaol.
We rejoice that our efforts did not fail:
The law may have us within its clutch.
But we are cemented together â\200\224 the
English and Dutch.

A poem penned by a 1922 striker in Boks-
burgâ\200\231s jail.

But the deadline passed without any propos-
als coming out.

No doubt it was this factor that prompted
chamber president Clive Knobbs to issue a
statement outlining the undertakings mine
employers are prepared to make. Knobbs
also expressed the hope that Steyn would
stand firm on his pledge in Parliament. He
said that although it would be preferable for
the chamber and the unions to reach an
accord on their own, it would be better for
government to take positive action rather
than allowing the â\200\234unacceptable status quoâ\200\235
to continue indefinitely.

The undertakings outlined by Knobbs are

that:

O All employees will receive equal pay for
work of equal value, irrespective of race;
O The services of union members and offi-
cials will not be terminated to create vacan-
cies for persons of other races;

O The chamber is prepared to constitute an
internal dismissals appeal mechanism to
consider allegations of unfair dismissal for
racial reasons;

00 Changes in work practices and employ-
ment conditions resulting from a change to
the definition would, if at all possible, not be
introduced unilaterally by employers, but
â\200\234rather after consultation and negotiationâ\200\235;
O Employment of all persons in all jobs will
be on merit and training standards will be
maintained. However, the notion of setting
employment ratios for different racial

groups in occupations that are currently
â\200\234scheduled personâ\200\235 jobs is rejected; and

O An industrial council should be established to monitor and enforce agreements between the chamber and the employee organisations.

Sources tell the FM that Knobbsâ\200\231s statement aroused much anger in union circles: they had told the chamber their proposals were in the process of being formulated and felt the statement was precipitate.

Last week the union sub-committee met to put the finishing touches to its security of employment proposals. Of course, the question in everyoneâ\200\231 minds was whether the MWU would go along with them.

The FM understands that MWU general secretary Arrie Paulus indicated he would support the sub-committeeâ\200\231s proposals, provided they included a demand that the number of jobs reserved for â\200\234scheduled personsâ\200\235 would not be reduced. It is understood that the other unions agreed to this.

But once Paulus had won this concession, he apparently threw down the gauntlet to the other unions by insisting that a demand for the abolition of the mining industryâ\200\231s allocation of occupations agreement be included in the proposals. The agreement, which allocates white mine employees to particular unions depending on the work they do, is a long-standing arrangement to prevent inter-union rivalry. The implications of Paulusâ\200\231s move are clear: if it is scrapped the MWU would go all out to organise white workers opposed to a change to the â\200\234scheduled personâ\200\235 definition.

Standing firm

Sources say the rest of the sub-committee objected to Paulusâ\200\231s proposal, arguing that the allocation of occupations agreement does not have a place in the security of employment negotiations. Paulus, as is his wont, is understood to have stood firm.

Nicholson says the FMâ\200\231s information is incorrect and Paulus has refused to comment. Nevertheless, Nicholson does confirm that the unions and officials associations have submitted their document to the Â¢hamber without the MWUâ\200\231s participation.

These developments raise immeasurably

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FOREIGN DEBT

Local bankers have expressed surprise and concern at the increasingly political stance adopted by mediator Fritz Leutwiler. So far, the Standstill Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) has tried its utmost to keep political issues in the background. But, says a local banker: "Judging by the noises that Leutwiler and foreign banks are making they are determined to bring political issues to the forefront."

Says another: "We are getting conflicting views on Leutwiler. Initially, it was thought he was the right man but there is a growing view that he is making emotional statements, which he should not in his position."

"Frankly, my view is that Leutwiler is now playing a game of politics. If he has a list of political demands he should convey them privately to the SCC or government rather than state them publicly. Perhaps he is trying to play up to his audience in the US," says yet another.

What is certain, however, is that all eyes will be on PW Botha to announce further substantial reform early in next year's parliamentary session. "If no political statements are forthcoming there will be a stand-up fight," says a banker.

Possibly Leutwiler is feeling the heat from foreign creditors determined to use the threat of political demands as a stick with which to beat the Standstill Committee. "Foreign banks will not put forward any proposals unless they can use them to obtain political mileage," says a dealer.

Their present stance suggests that agreement will be subject to scrutiny and revision until all debt has been repaid. "If a rescheduling agreement is reached it will probably be reviewed every six months depending on what progress is made on the political front," says a banker.

Whatever the outcome, there is a lot of posturing from both sides. Little surprise has been shown at the extension of the standstill till the end of March.

"We all knew that was going to happen. US banks will not be seen to agree to anything unless there are political strings attached," says a forex dealer. In fact, there

have been strong indications that US banks suggested that SA extend the moratorium unilaterally to take the heat off themselves.

â\200\234If US banks were seen giving in to SA, other debtors would put pressure on them for

similar deals,â\200\235 says one banker.

Leutwiler

The politics of debt

That rescheduling is proving a powerful lever for political reform is undeniable. SA has neither the reserves nor a sufficiently healthy trade balance to start repaying large amounts of .debts immediately, particularly with governmentâ\200\231s recent attempts to stimulate the economy. And with delay there is the prospect that demands for political reform could escalate. Any amicable agreement implies an increase in margins on foreign loans, especially if they are effectively extended from short- into long-term loans.

Prior to the standstill loans were contracted for 12 months or less at rates ranging from one-eighth to five-eighths per cent above Libor. Since the standstill, however, foreign banks have increased short-term margins by about a quarter per cent. â\200\234But foreign banks will now expect margins related to five-year money. I would not be surprised if they start negotiating around 2,5%

above Libor,â\200\235 says a banker.

The feeling is SA debtors would pitch their initial figure at 0,75% above Libor. Roughly 1,5% could be a compromise. The interest payable is open to negotiation, says Japie Jacobs, Senior Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank.

Complicating the issue is the feeling of US banks that they have been unfairly prejudiced because debt that falls outside the moratorium mainly credit for capital goods for parastatals is mostly owned to European banks.

Many issues

Meanwhile, many issues remain unresolved. Every measure introduced by the Standstill Committee raises a thousand questions, says a banker.

For example, recent measures require that exporters cover forward. But if an export order falls through because of a trade boycott who will carry the loss due to forward cover? Will companies be forced to absorb a loss not of their own making or will they have access to other parties? asks a dealer.

The possibility of an early resolution of SA's foreign debt crisis seems to be receding as both parties ready themselves for yet another round of negotiation.

Says Jacobs: The Standstill Committee has sent documents to the major creditor banks. They will respond officially to Price Waterhouse in London. The deadline is

December 22. Once this has occurred we will revise our proposals and make them available for further negotiation. |

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
Services gremlin?

Serious doubts have been expressed over the actual size of the current account surplus. Officially, SA is expected to realise a R5,5 billion surplus for 1985.

But Cees Bruggemans, chief economist at Barclays, says part of the surplus may be illusory. He feels that service items, which include interest payments on foreign debt, are grossly underestimated.

The private and public sector, after having borrowed extensively abroad in 1984, now faces a considerable interest burden. The extent of these interest payments is questionable.

He attributes a discrepancy to lack of knowledge on the part of the authorities about private sector transactions, specifical-

ly those of an inter-company nature and between companies and overseas banks. He estimates interest understatements this year will amount to R2 billion, thus suggesting the current account surplus may only be R3,5 billion.

Rudolf Gouws, Nedbank's chief economist, shares Bruggemans' sentiments. Unrecorded transactions not reflected in official statistics could very well tell a different story. If one thinks of the interest burden it would seem service payments are underesti-

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Barclay's Bruggemans
doubting figures

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uled for next year. The 66 000 ha area will almost double KwaNdebele's size. Moutse is a well-established area with infrastructure and the hospital KwaNdebele lacks. It also has good small business potential. |

â\200\230RELEASE MANDELAâ\200\231 RALLY
UDF re-enters fray

The incident-marked United Democratic Front (UDF) rally in Durban at the weekend signalled the re-entry into politics of the acquitted treason trialists.

It was the UDF's first legal open-air meeting in Natal since the trial began and a crowd of about 5000 turned out. Even the heavy contingent of police did little to dampen their enthusiasm. As former trialist and UDF official, Mewa Ramgobin, observed, it â\200\234showed we have not lost our political cue. From here the struggle goes on.â\200\235

The rally was originally called to urge the unconditional release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela. But it ended up having the dual purpose of welcoming back members of the UDF Natal executive who last week had charges of treason withdrawn against them in the Maritzburg Supreme Court.

The gathering was treated to fiery speeches from UDF national presidents, Albertina Sisulu and Archie Gumede and treasurer Curnick Ndlovu, all of whom praised Mandela's qualities as a national leader and urged that he be â\200\234released to the people.â\200\235

As the crowd was filing from the Curries Fountain stadium, police and UDF supporters clashed. Police say a bus, police vehicles and shop windows were stoned. They retaliated by charging a section of the crowd and bull-whipping them. Several people were treated in hospital for minor injuries.

Judging by the mood of the meeting, it would seem that Mandela's release is a high priority before the UDF gives up its campaign of civil disobedience.

There are encouraging signs, too, that government is being less intransigent on the issue. However, last week's landmine blasts in Messina must come as a setback to those who believe Mandela's release is imminent. Indiscriminate killing of that kind serves to lend plausibility to government's contention that one cannot negotiate with terrorists.

Ramgobin says for the time being current UDF strategy will stay on course. He con-

firms that he and several other trialists are considering legal action against the Minister of Police for their detention under Section 28 of the International Security Act. At issue will be the illegality of their detention and the loss of earnings and personal dislocation to their lives they suffered.

Says Ramgobin: "The ball is very much in government's court. It must realise that it cannot talk only to its paid functionaries. Dialogue must be with those who oppose its policies and its power. There is no point in talking to people with whom it shares power even if they are only junior partners."

COMMONWEALTH COMMISSION

Treading cautiously

The Eminent Persons Group (EPG), assigned by the Commonwealth to enter into dialogue with President P W Botha over apartheid reforms, has concluded its preliminary meetings in London and dispersed for the Christmas holidays to ponder on its delicate mission.

The EPG has decided that the best way to steer a safe course between the Scylla of the Pretoria government and the Charybdis of the ANC-Anti-Apartheid Movement, is to keep such a low profile that it is almost invisible. Fewer people have actually seen the EPG than saw that other visitor from beyond, ET.

This explains why public comment by members of the commission has been almost non-existent. With the example of the ill-fated EEC troika to Pretoria behind it, the EPG is determined to advance step by cautious step.

President Botha can rest assured, therefore, that the EPG is not going to Pretoria to pick a quarrel with him or hold a pistol to his head. It genuinely wants dialogue, or at least, most of its members do.

This, anyway, is the EPG's present intention: what happens when the irresistible force of Ri xBotgg}n}sgts the immovable object of "Kenya's John Malecela or Nigeria's General Olusegun Obasanjo, is another matter. There are wild cards in the pack (People December 13).

Soft ultimatum

Implied in the EPG's visit is an ultimatum: if Pretoria does not make adequate progress with apartheid reform within six months of the issuing of the Commonwealth communiqué (on October 20), some Commonwealth members will proceed to impose even tougher sanctions.

April 20, therefore, is the nominal deadline. But the EPG's starting point is January 1, so that will postpone the deadline to June 30. And if the talks make reasonable progress by then, even that deadline will recede into the distance.

Can reasonable progress be made? Within the EPG itself there are varying opinions,

with Lord Barber at one polarity and Malecela and Obasanjo at the other. One good knockabout session with Pik Botha, and the

EPG's consensus could be sent flying.

As for the ANC-AAM, they are sceptical about the visit. At best they see the EPG as Commonwealth tourists who will achieve nothing; at worst, as a kind of Contact Group which will deflect the pressures now building up on the Botha government. Possibly, neither the ANC nor the AAM will go as far as Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, who is openly hostile to the visit and who would regard a meeting between the EPG and Mandela in a prison cell as a betrayal of the Commonwealth position. Mandela must first be released and the ANC legalised, declares

Huddleston. But the ANC-AAM will watch every EPG move like hawks, and it can be only a matter of time before Lusaka starts to take issue with the EPG over its programme.

There is another problem. If Botha agrees to see the EPG before he makes his Son of Rubicon speech in late January, he will be seen by many of his own followers to be yielding to international pressure. But if he says he can see the EPG only after he has made his speech then what will there be to talk about, except an accomplished fact? It's all very tricky. Perhaps ET should be sent to Pretoria instead of the EPG. After all, both ET and the Pretoria politicians understand the language of outer space. |

CONSUMER BOYCOTTS A black Christmas

The consumer boycotts on the Reef and in Pretoria presage a black Christmas for township dwellers. Economic realities are being elbowed aside as escalating boycott-related violence takes hold in the townships, catch-

ing ordinary black folk in the crossfire.

There have been widespread reports of intimidation and attacks on blacks still shopping in city centres, leading to security force intervention to protect those who want to Christmas shop despite appeals from consumer boycott organisers.

There have been open offers to negotiate over the boycott. The Associated Chambers of Commerce (Assocom) has declared its willingness to talk to boycott organisers, and public support for such a move has come from retail industry leaders.

However, one problem in the PWYV area appears to be a lack of leadership. This suffered another setback with the detention last week of Jabu Nigwena, chief spokesman for the Soweto Consumer Boycott Committee, which is likely to hamper negotiations. And retailers face the problem that none of the committee's (political) demands can be met by them, since that is obviously in government hands. A boycott leader has reportedly said that it is not the committee's intention to force retailers out of the market but rather to motivate them to force the authorities to meet their demands.

Official consumer body spokesmen say it is too early to gauge the effects of the boycott in Johannesburg, which relies on Soweto for as much as 80% of its trade, according to National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (Nafcoc) president, Sam Motsuenyane.

For small business in Pretoria the boycott has certainly begun to bite. Some shopkeepers report trade is down more than 50% and fear the blow to turnovers that even two more weeks of the boycott will take. This is despite Assocom's information that business picked up over the weekend after Mamelodi residents were assured by police that they could shop (and return home with their goods intact) freely and in peace.

The security assurance was conveyed by means of pamphlets â\200\224 issued on behalf of a group apparently representing the Pretoria business community â\200\224 dropped by helicopter over Mamelodi last week.

The boycotts, in protest against the State of Emergency, the presence of troops in the townships and detentions under the emergency, began on December 2 in Pretoria and a week later on the Reef. They are due to end on December 31, unless they go the way of the eastern Cape consumer boycott which overran its deadline due to negotiation problems. The Port Elizabeth consumer boycott, which crippled many businesses in the city, was due to last for two months but ran for nearly five after boycott leaders were detained. The four-month-old consumer boycotts in Queenstown and Uitenhage have also continued longer than originally planned. A PE Chamber of Commerce spokesman said most small businesses which survived the boycott there had done so only by changing marketing tactics so as to reduce their reliance on black custom. In the two weeks since the boycott was suspended,

... not th

Black Sashâ\200\231s Duncan
end of the boycott weapon

the swing seemed to be back to white traders, he said, mostly because of higher prices in the townships.

Boycott committees have prohibited any celebration during the boycott, including weddings, parties, home improvements and even the wearing of new clothes. There have been reports of women being undressed and searched by youths in the Soweto streets and of groceries destroyed by random groups of youths.

The Pretoria Consumer Boycott Committee (PCBC) has made urgent appeals to township youths not to harass shoppers after being inundated with complaints from black consumers. It has appointed â\200\234area committeesâ\200\235 to ensure that people defying the boycott are not harassed; their wish is that the boycott be observed voluntarily. Marshals appointed by the committee are the only

people authorised to check if people are breaking the boycott and they had instructions not to destroy confiscated goods, the PCBC has said.

But Black Sash president, Sheena Duncan, says it would be a mistake to put the

success of the boycott down to intimidation as it seemed to be a much more deeply based and popularly supported action than some reports implied. Whether or not this boycott is successful, I don't think it's the last time this powerful political weapon will be used," she said. 2]

INDUSTRIAL COURT

More NUM victories

Four more cases arising from the dismissal of members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for participating in the lawful September wage strike at Gencor mines have been heard in the Industrial Court recently.

This follows the court's decision that several hundred strikers had been unfairly dismissed by the Marievale goldmine (Current Affairs November 22). In the latest hearings, 74 workers at four mines have been reinstated.

After a hearing on November 29, the court granted an order temporarily reinstating Emmanuel Mpetha, the chief NUM shaft steward at the Unisel goldmine. He had been dismissed for distributing leaflets detailing the union's strike rules. The order was backdated to November 1.

On December 10, after the union had closed its case, Matla Collieries agreed to a consent order in terms of which 11 miners should be reinstated. The order gives them 21 days in which to return to work.

The following day the court heard an application for the reinstatement of 10 strikers at Transvaal Navigation Collieries (TNC). The company contested the case and on Tuesday this week the court ordered their reinstatement under similar conditions as in the Matla case.

A further case heard on December 12 has led to the reinstatement of 52 Beatrix goldmine workers dismissed for participation in events surrounding the strike. At negotiations between the NUM and the company at the court hearing, agreement was reached that the miners be reinstated subject to the right of the company to conduct disciplinary hearings into the conduct of the miners if they still believe it to be necessary. The union will then be entitled to challenge any adverse findings in the Industrial Court. The 52 Beatrix workers (who include six of the seven union shaft stewards at the mine) are to receive three-and-a-half months' back

pay.

Meanwhile, a secondary dispute is brewing over the future of about 50 Marievale workers who returned to the mine after the Industrial Court's 21-day deadline. Marievale is refusing to re-employ them. But the

union claims the mine failed to give timely notice to The Employment Bureau of Africa (Teba) of the miners' impending return. Without documentary clearance from Teba it is difficult for foreign workers to return to SA. About 400 others have been reinstated at Marievale so far.

The Manpower Department, too, is responsible for a delay in the final resolution of this dispute. It is now three-and-a-half months since the NUM applied for the establishment of a conciliation board to consider the case, and no decision has yet been made - an unusually long delay.

The Marievale case is one of the most

crucial and controversial that the court has considered in its seven-year existence, and there is speculation that the department is thinking long and hard over its next move. A decision not to appoint the board would mean that the case could not be referred back to the court for a final order. This would doubtless unleash a stream of protest from some members of the industrial relations community, while the wisdom of the court's ruling has already been questioned by others.

Another case arising from dismissals during the September wage strike, this time involving Anglovaal's Hartebeestfontein goldmine, is to be the subject of a test case on a vital point of industrial law.

The company, the NUM and 23 of its members (the applicants), have agreed to apply for a final Industrial Court order for reinstatement in terms of section 46 of the Labour Relations Act. The case will then be postponed pending an Appellate Division hearing over whether the Industrial Court is entitled to rule in favour of the reinstatement of workers on the grounds of equity, when dismissal is justified in terms of common law.

The Industrial Court has, on a number of occasions, ruled that it is entitled to do so, including in the Marievale case. Marievale has disputed this ruling and has taken the case on review to the Supreme Court over this issue, among others. A similar case involving the NUM and Vaal Reefs is also pending in the Supreme Court. i)

MULTIRACIAL BEACHES
Durban leaps in

Race barriers came down on four of Durban's beaches last week. As expected, the sight of multiracial crowds sunning themselves on Durban's Golden Mile stopped few people in their tracks.

After three days of rain, the sun peeped out on Monday. Durbanites made the most of their public holiday and headed for the sea. At the newly enclosed paddling pool children of all complexions gaily splashed one another, a coloured man dozed belly-up in the sun, lovers promenaded and an African family, a little self-consciously, built a sand castle at the water's edge.

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BLACK MUNICIPALITIES

Restoration of Alex

Twenty-two years after government destroyed Alexandra as a place where blacks had land tenure rights, the entire 854 ha of land comprising the township has been handed back to the people. The transfer from control of the West Rand Development Board which, like all such boards, is to be scrapped and replaced by a Regional Services Council next year was made to the Alexandra Council last week.

Additional land has also been granted to Alex, which has unsuccessfully been fighting for the adjacent white industrial areas of Kew, Wynberg and Marlboro to be annexed to it in a bid to create a workable revenue base.

The Johannesburg City Council has granted 80 ha, part of Lombardy East, to the black township, which welcomes the extension. However, the move has divided the white suburb into two factions, with some residents opposing and others welcoming it.

Paradoxically, Alexandra lost its freehold rights in 1963 when, in terms of government policy, which ruled out black residential rights in white SA, government decided to destroy the township. It eventually forced stand-owners to sell, or expropriated their properties. These rights are now to be restored.

Alexandra Council's liaison officer, Nunka Mkhaliwe, tells the FM that preference is to be given to former land-owners when residential stands are re-sold to inhabitants. He points out, however, that the stands are likely to be smaller than the original ones because the township has been replanned for redevelopment.

On the additional 80 ha of land, the Alexandra local authority plans to erect 1 000 prestige houses, a technical high school, an hotel and a sports stadium that can seat up to 50 000.

White opponents of the land donation claim it will result in the creation of slum conditions on their doorstep and, therefore, devalue properties in the suburb. On the other hand, those in favour argue that the people of Lombardy East and Alexandra have lived harmoniously in close proximity for years with the crime rate in the white suburb no worse than in other suburbs.

Says Mkhaliwe: We hope the fact that we intend erecting prestige houses on the additional land will allay those white fears. In

terms of plans to develop Alexandra extension, London Road is to be extended to the N3 motorway to form a buffer between the black and white suburbs.

The new, re-structured Alexandra has a total of 444 completed new flats, 167 sub-economic houses and 99 owner-built prestige houses. In addition, a high-school, creche, youth centre, four netball courts and three all-weather tennis courts have been provided for residents.

But the township's re-development pro-

gramme, undertaken by the local council, is still nowhere near completion. Facilities still to be provided include a shopping complex with office accommodation, cinemas, shops, a supermarket and some medium-density housing, plus seven higher primary schools, seven high-schools and three technical institutions. u

HEALTH SERVICES

Duplicating failure

Pretoria's intention to restructure health services in line with the principles of the new constitution looks rather like duplicating a failed idea. Doctors say the plan to separate services along 'town' and 'general' affairs is doomed. The policy was tried in Namibia and didn't work. Yet government seems determined to repeat it here.

In Namibia, (which some see as a laboratory for the kinds of ethnic structures Pretoria wishes to implement in SA) article AG8 of 1980 gave birth to 11 ethnic governments. Each was given responsibility for services such as health, education and social welfare on an ethnic, 'town' affairs basis. But health services subsequently degenerated under pressure of enormous practical and financial problems. This led to a re-evaluation by the Broeksma Commission of Inquiry into Namibia's health services in 1982.

Broeksma's main recommendation was that health services be taken out of the hands of the ethnic authorities and

handed back to central government. In 1984 Pre-toria accepted the proposal but with the proviso that any ethnic government able to finance its own health service be allowed to do so. In practice, however, only Namibia's whites can afford their own service. The present transitional government runs the rest, thus undercutting the ethnic system whose death was overseen by the AG at the time, Dr Willie van Niekerk now Minister of Health and Population Development of the House of Assembly.

SA's health services are currently being reorganised with responsibility for its own affairs being given to the coloured, Indian and white chambers of Parliament. National and regional administrative structures are already in place. Some minor services, as well as certain hospitals, have been allocated. The major carve-up is anticipated next year with the phasing out of the provincial councils. In terms of the new constitution, the provincial system is to be replaced by a non-elected, two-tier system consisting of the

Willie van Niekerk

Administrator and his executive in conjunction with the new Regional Services Councils.

The tri-cameral health ministers all sit on the National Health Policy Council (NHPC) which is intended to co-ordinate own and general services. Together with the national and independent homeland states, SA now has 14 health ministries. Van Niekerk has indicated that ministers of health in the independent homelands may be asked to sit on the NHPC. Provision for urban Africans, it seems, will be a general affair,

Van Niekerk tells the FM that the whole matter, including responsibility for particular aspects of health care and their financing, is still under investigation. But it all looks suspiciously like the unworkable maze the Namibians tried to cope with, and doctors are predicting more chaos.

Hospitals throughout the service are already hampered by cut-backs in budgets and many are not functioning to capacity. Cape Director of Hospital Services, Dr Niklaas Louw, announced last week that two new 40-bed hospitals in Piketberg and Porteville could

~ not be opened because of

insufficient funds. And
Tygerberg recently an-
. nounced it was cash-

- strapped, needing some
R9m to maintain ser-
vices.

Despite a shortage of
funds, the expensive sep-
aration of services along
ethnic lines goes on. Jo-
hannesburg's Coronation
{ hospital, which previous-
ly served coloureds and
Indians, has been told not
to accept Indian patients.
They must now go to the
new Indian Hospital in
Hillbrow. Many, though
not all, hospitals are al-
ready racially exclusive.
Although 'multiracial' hospitals have seg-
regated wards, they are still administered as
a single unit.

Doctors say any further attempt to carve
up their duties along racial lines can only
lead to bureaucratic complication and finan-
cial waste. For instance, would a hospital
serving more than one group have separate
superintendents employed by their own
health departments, or would one superin-
tendent be bogged down coping with separ-
ate bureaucracies? Alarmed that further
fragmentation would only serve to worsen
the situation, the Medical Association of SA
as well as the National Medical and Dental
Association and the medical school deans are
calling for a single health system. Says
Professor George Dall, dean of the medical
faculty at UCT: 'The whole idea is crazy.
It's not efficient, or practical or logical. We
should be spending our limited funds as prof-
itably as we can and not wasting them on
political ideology.' u

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